

SLPAB 2003 Changes and Reminders for the New Year

About the Board

Our mission: To promote services and protect consumers through information, oversight and standards for the professions of speech-language pathology and audiology. This serves to:

- Enhance community outreach, education and responsiveness to consumers and licensees,
- Maintain standards that evolve with relevant changes in scope of practice,
- Monitor the impact of state and national trends on practices, and
- Work collaboratively with other boards, educational institutions, organizations, governmental and enforcement agencies to assure quality services for consumers.

Our Vision: The Board serves to protect consumers by ensuring safe and efficacious practice and facilitates excellence in speech-language pathology and audiology.

We look to our licensees and to the consumers of speech-language pathology and audiology services for feedback on how the Board can improve its professional oversight. Often times issues brought before the Board are complex and require extensive research or investigation before a resolution is reached. The Board meets at least four times a year to deliberate on pressing issues that impact the professions. These public meetings are key for informational gathering and afford the public a forum to address the Board members on any professional matter of personal interest.

Some of the key issues facing the Board are:

- Board approval for doctoral degree programs;
- advertising professional degrees;
- RPE changes;
- scope of practice overlap with other regulated and non-regulated professions;
- specialty certification for pediatric audiology;
- prohibitions on referrals for remuneration;
- continuing professional development program requirements; and
- evolving scope of practice issues (e.g., endoscopy, intraoperative monitoring).

Even though it is often times a lengthy process, the Board makes every effort to be responsive to your concerns by considering all the information available and making responsible and effective decisions.

BOARD MEMBERS

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2002 Legislative Update

Senate Bill 1379 (Machado), effective January 1, 2003, makes significant changes to the laws governing the practices of speech-language pathology and audiology as follows: authorizes speech-language pathologists to use instrumental procedures, specifically the flexible fiberoptic nasendoscopic procedure; amends the parameters for Board approval of the required professional experience plan; clarifies the national equivalency requirements; and, designates the financial responsibility for site inspection of speech-language pathology assistant training programs to the sponsoring institution. For a complete account of the new laws, please review SB 1379. The following provides a summary of each of the new provisions:

- **Nasendoscopy Requirements:**
Enables licensed speech-language pathologists to perform nasendoscopic procedures once the licensee has competently performed a minimum of 25 procedures under the direct authorization of a board certified otolaryngologist and the supervision of a physician. The procedures must be performed in an acute care setting (licensed as such by the Department of Health Services) with facility protocols for emergency medical backup procedures, including a physician or other appropriate medical professionals readily available. *To determine whether a facility meets the requirements of an acute care setting, you can check with the facility to verify the license status and/or contact the Department of Health Services branch office in your area.*
Once the otolaryngologist has documented and verified the training and competence of the speech-language pathologists, the speech-language pathologist may independently perform nasendoscopic procedures in the aforementioned acute care settings.
- **Required Professional Experience (RPE) Amendments:**
Eliminates the requirement for advanced Board approval for each **change** during the course of the RPE plan. *Applicants are still required to possess the Temporary Required Professional Experience License prior to beginning the professional experience.*
Also, SB 1379 requires that by July 1, 2003 any person obtaining the required professional experience for permanent licensure must be issued a RPE temporary license regardless of the employment setting. ***Employment in a public school or federal agency will no longer be an exempt setting from licensing requirements for individuals completing the required professional experience.***
- **Equivalent Qualifications/ Certificate of Clinical Competence:**
Enables the Board to require applicants who possess the certificate of clinical competence to rectify any deficiencies in state licensing requirements within one year from the date of the deficiency notice or the application for licensure is deemed abandoned.
This provision applies to applicants who obtain the required professional experience in California in a setting that requires licensure but fails to apply for the appropriate provisional license.

- **Speech-Language Pathology Assistant Training Program Site Visits:**
Places the financial responsibility for the travel and per diem expenses associated with conducting on-site program evaluations with the institution subject to Board review.

For further information on any of the new provisions, please contact the Board office.

Senate Bill 2021, as enacted, removed the Board from the auspices of the Medical Board and placed the Board under the general umbrella of the Department of Consumer Affairs. The new law extended the Board's sunset date to January 1, 2005. In addition, SB 2021 authorized the Board to collect fees for the issuance of a license status and history certification letter (more commonly known as the "letter of good standing") in an amount not to exceed \$25. At this time, the Board has set the fee amount at \$10, which is sufficient to cover the administrative costs to produce each letter. *Check out our website for forthcoming regulations to establish the new fee.*

New Regulations Regarding Extensions to the Required Professional Experience (RPE)

As of January 23, 2003, regulations defining the terms and conditions for a reissuance of the temporary required professional experience license are in effect. The regulations provide additional time for individuals who have not obtained the required skills during the initial RPE period. Temporary license holders who have not submitted all other outstanding licensing documentation or who have not taken and passed the national praxis examination are not eligible for the additional time.

Required Professional Experience (RPE) Changes & New Forms

To implement the new laws that eliminated advanced board-approval for changes in the RPE plan, the Board has revised its RPE licensing packets. "Notification of Change" forms are no longer required, nor will RPEs be required to submit a verification form prior to completing the experience. Instead, the Board has developed two new documents as an informational tool for both the RPE and the supervisor. The documents entitled "RPE Temporary License Acknowledgement Statement" and the "Supervisor Responsibility Statement" provides the RPE and each supervisor with a concise listing of the terms and conditions that must be followed for the RPE setting. The new forms are available on the Board website under licensing information.

Continuing Professional Development – Does This Apply or Not?

Continuing professional development requirements for license renewal have been in effect since April 1999. As with any "new" requirement, the first few compliance cycles generate questions and often times confusion. By posing your questions and concerns to our office, the Board is aware of program requirements that warrant further clarification. An area of confusion for many licensees is that of courses offered by approved providers that may not be practice specific. While

they may be outstanding self-improvement courses, courses that address more general topics, such as cultural diversity, mental and physical fitness, or how to market your services, are not applicable to the CPD license renewal requirements. For example, The regulations specify that CPD courses must be "relevant" to the respective practice and must be related to direct or indirect client care. What does that mean? Bottom line - the course must relate to the practice in which you hold a license and must provide resources that enhance your *professional skills*. The intent of the CPD regulations is to encourage quality care for consumers of speech-language pathology and audiology services. So, the next time you are searching for a CPD course, ask yourself these questions: Does the topic of the course address the practice of speech-language pathology and/or audiology in terms of service delivery or case management issues? Does this course satisfy the intent of the CPD laws and regulations by directly improving my professional speech-language pathology or audiology services to my clients?

Speech-Language Pathology Assistant Grandfather Clause – Time Is Running Out

As of June 1, 2003, the grandfather clause that enables speech-language pathology aides to apply for registration as speech-language pathology assistants based on work experience will expire. For anyone interested in pursuing registration, check out our website under "SLP Assistants" for information on registration requirements.

WWW.SLPAB.CA.GOV – Check Out Our Website

- Download the Laws and Regulations (Update 7/2002)
- Links and information on The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA)
- Amended forms and information on the Required Professional Experience Temporary License provisions
- Sign-up to receive email Board "hotsheets" for periodic updates on Board activity

Important Reminders

If a licensee has moved, the law requires that the Board be notified, **in writing, within 30 days of the change of address**. Without a correct address of record, you **may not** receive your license renewal notice in the mail. The renewal notice is sent as a courtesy to licensees 90 days prior to the license expiration. A licensee should renew their license four to six weeks prior to the expiration date to allow for processing time.

Dates to Remember

April 24-25, 2003 – Board Meeting Sacramento
July 17-18, 2003 – Board Meeting Sacramento